

December 2015

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Depression During the Holidays

The holiday season is advertised has a happy and celebrated time of year. To some that may be the case, however, to many others it brings on feelings of sadness, loneliness, and depression. It may not be just the holidays, the change in season during the winter can also cause depression.

Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD for short, is also known as winter depression or winter blues. SAD is considered a major depressive disorder

- ♦ Older adults are at increased risk for experiencing depression.
- ♦ Depression is a true treatable medical condition, not a normal part of aging.
- ♦ Cold weather can cause joint pain which effects the ability to get out in the weather and travel.
- ♦ Living alone or far away from family and friends can increase depression.
- ♦ Serious medical conditions and illness can increase risk for depression



WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

- ♦ Minor or Serious medical problem
- ♦ Chronic Pain or complications
- ♦ Memory loss
- ♦ Poor diet
- ♦ Loss of spouse, friend, companion
- ♦ Lack of exercise
- ♦ Change in routine
- ♦ Frustrations with aging

-Continued on back-

Depression during the holidays, Cont.

What to watch for:

- ♦ Feelings of hopelessness and / or being negative
- ♦ Feeling guilt, worthlessness
- ♦ Restlessness, Irritability
- ♦ Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once enjoyable
- ♦ Loss of energy or being tired all the time
- ♦ Difficulty with making decision or problems concentrating
- ♦ Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- ♦ Overeating or loss of appetite
- ♦ Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- ♦ Persistent aches or pains headaches, headaches, digestive problems that do not improve.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/mentalhealth/index.htm>

www.longtermcarelink.net/article-2013-11-11.htm

www.boomers-with-elderly-parents.com

How do I find HELP?

- ♦ Talk to your primary health care provider
- ♦ Talk to your family or friends
- ♦ Socializing with others can make a difference



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Call 911
- Visit a nearby emergency room or your doctor
- Suicide prevention: 1-800-273-8255
- Trained Counselor: 1-800-799-4889

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<http://chfs.ky.gov/dail/default.htm>